

WELLS CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE & COUNCIL MATTERS COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 10TH APRIL 2025 AT 7:00PM IN WELLS TOWN HALL

PRESENT: Cllrs: L Agabani, S Cursley (Chair), G Folkard, T Robbins, H Siggs

IN ATTENDANCE: Town Clerk: H Wilkins
RFO: C Woodland
WCC Cllrs: D Orrett, S Powell
SC Cllr and MP for Wells and Mendip Hills: T Munt
WCC Staff: S Glendinning
1 Member of Public

25/33/FCM APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Cllrs: J Browne, T Pullin, I Von Mensenkampff

25/34/FCM DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interests, made under the Council's Code of Conduct adopted 12th May 2022.

None declared.

25/35/FCM MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & COUNCIL MATTERS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 13TH MARCH 2025

The minutes were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

25/36/FCM MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Chris Simons raised the following:

- Items 6 & 7 on the agenda, the reports were missing from the website. The Town Clerk agreed to look into this.
- There is no way of knowing the age of debts within the monthly financial report. The Chair agreed this was a valid statement and would look to provide clarity.
- Salaries spent is showing as 125.3%, what is the reason for the overspend, this should be reported throughout the year and not just at year end. The Chair agreed and advised we would seek to include in the monthly accounts for the next financial year.

25/37/FCM FINANCE

C Woodland (RFO) presented the draft Finance reports for March 2025.

The audit was taking place on Friday 11th April 2025.

Cllr Siggs asked what was in the earmarked reserves. The RFO explained, £15,000 for the skatepark and £4,143 Climate Change fund. An election amount, as agreed, will be included for this coming year.

Cllr Siggs queried an amount marked 'parking refund'. The RFO explained this was for a local resident who had paid up front for an annual car park space at the Portway Annexe but had cancelled early. A refund had been provided for the remainder of the year and the space had now been re-let to a new user and their fee received.

Cllr Siggs also raised the issue of the salaries overspend at 125.3%, which had been mentioned earlier in the meeting by Mr Simons. He stressed the committee needs to be more transparent with managing the budget. The Town Clerk agreed with this and confirmed, together with the RFO, she was looking to provide revised draft

reports for next month's meeting which will offer greater clarity of budgets and cost centres moving forward.

Cllr Folkard asked what expenditure had been deferred into the new financial year. The RFO agreed to provide in writing.

The Town Clerk advised that she had requested the RFO remove the noted investment income associated with Bishop's Barn and Recreation Ground and moving it into a separate account as this was funding allocated to the trust, not directly to WCC and as such, should be accounted for separately. Equally, a separate committee of the Trust would need to ensure compliance. Finance and Council matters committee would still have a view of this fund but it would sit outside of the council's cash book.

25/38/FCM ASSET INVENTORY

The RFO presented the new asset inventory which had been prepared in advance of the audit.

Cllr Siggs requested that items are depreciated accurately and the Town Clerk confirmed this would be reviewed in year.

25/39/FCM TOWN HALL LIFT REPAIR/REPLACEMENT

The Town Clerk presented her report which had been circulated prior to the meeting. The lift has not been operational since November 2024, leaving the building non-compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act.

Quotes from four suppliers had been obtained to either repair the existing lift or replace the lift.

It was the recommendation of the Town Clerk to proceed with Supplier D for repair to the existing lift as they were the most cost effective and would be able to install within the shorter timescale, 4 – 6 weeks. They were also involved in the installation of the original lift and are therefore familiar with its workings.

All members present agreed to proceed with Supplier D.

Cllr Siggs raised the issue of disabled access in the rear of the building. The Town Clerk agreed to look at this when the new committee structures are in place in May 2025 and in line with the future use of the back area of the building.

25/40/FCM LCN SEED GRANT FUNDING UPDATE

The Town Clerk has received a response from a supplier. She has contacted SALC for an extension on the timelines for the seed grant funding and is awaiting a response.

25/41/FCM DEVOLUTION

The Town Clerk advised the staffing committee, which had taken place prior to this meeting, had been updated on the legal requirement for TUPE transfers from ID Verde.

25/42/FCM ANY MATTERS OF URGENT REPORT

Cllr Folkard asked when the audit report would be available. The RFO explained it was a new auditor, dates were not yet known.

Cllr Agabani asked what reports should they expect and when would they be received showing market income. The Town Clerk confirmed the first draft report would be available for the next meeting.

Cllr Siggs asked if the market rights had been officially transferred. The Town Clerk advised a written agreement is in place, but the official papers are currently with the legal team at Somerset Council and would likely take some time to navigate the process.

25/43/FCM DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 7pm, Thursday 8th May 2025

EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Note: It is necessary for matters to be considered in confidence, it was proposed by the Chair that a resolution be passed under the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 as amended to allow a private report.

Minutes signed by The Chair:

Date: